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Depew, Chauncey Mitchell

Speech by the Hon.
Chauncey M. Depew...

[Brooklyn]

[1916]

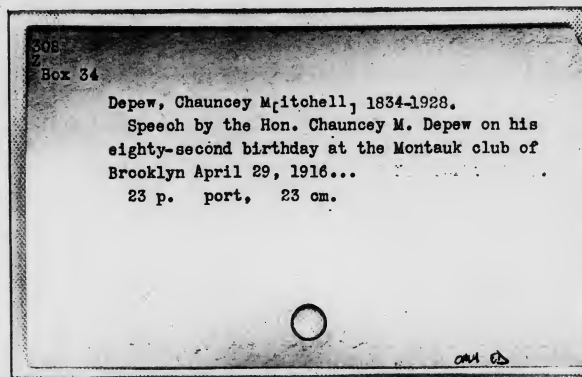
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Gift of the President

SPeech BY THE
Hon. Chauncey M. Depew
ON HIS
EIGHTY-SECOND BIRTHDAY
AT THE
MONTAUK CLUB OF BROOKLYN

April 29, 1916

Being the Twenty-fifth Annual Dinner Given Him by this Club.



Hon. Truly Chauncey M. Depew

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Compliments of
Chauncey H. Depew

(Mr. Depew's birthday is the 23d of April, but Club conditions fixed the 29th for the dinner.)

MR. PRESIDENT AND GENTLEMEN OF THE MONTAUK CLUB:

All anniversaries are interesting. Each has its historical significance or celebrates an event worth remembering to those who participate, or has a sentiment of lasting interest. Of patriotic celebrations, of centennials and semi-centennials of great importance, we have had an unusual number in the last quarter of a century. With one after another came recurrences of the birthdays of the Republic and of the organization of the different departments of our government. In the life of the individual the 25th anniversary is the most interesting. We, here tonight engaging in the twenty-fifth annual recurrence of this most gratifying compliment which you have paid me for a quarter of a century, have feelings both pathetic and joyful. We cannot forget and we contribute the wreath of affection and memory to those who have joined the majority during this period. But we extend our congratulations and felicitations to those who are still with us in full vigor, health and happiness; we welcome the younger men who have come into this association and join in this celebration.

THE MOST IMPORTANT AGE IN LIFE.

Twenty-five is the most important age in the life of a young man. At twenty-one he becomes a voter and a citizen, but in most cases he is a callow youth of violent opinions and immature judgment. At twenty-five his feet are standing upon more solid ground. In estimating himself and his powers and comparing them with his ambitions, he has decided upon his career and entered hopefully and joyously upon it. We are misled when we take the example of extraordinary geniuses for judging our own average selves. William Pitt at twenty-

four was Prime Minister of England. He organized the forces and reorganized them and again reorganized them, which finally resulted in Waterloo and the defeat of Napoleon. But he had a wonderful heredity in a marvelous father and was himself one of the few constructive geniuses of the ages. Delane, famous editor of the London *Times*, entered upon his duties at twenty-four. Walters, the sole owner of the *Times* in the second generation, a remarkable judge of men, discovered the singular maturity and the wonderful powers of Delane. For thirty-seven years, Delane was the London *Times*. He made it the "Thunderer" of Europe. He foresaw events, he recognized budding statesmen, his vision encompassed all European and Asiatic activities. With genuine foresight, with the ability to select incomparable aids for the different departments of the work, a courage which knew neither fear nor apprehension and honor of the purest and highest type, he made the *Times* a leader of public opinion, a maker of measures and a tremendous factor in the creation of Greater England. But there again we have the exceptional editor, who had no predecessors or successors.

At twenty-five the average man knows the kind of a woman he wants for a helpmate for life. I do not exclude love from this selection, but I do say that love and judgment are more likely to go hand in hand together at this period than at twenty-one and under. Everybody in the teens and up to twenty-one has had his first passion which he calls love. He is lucky, if matrimony follows, in discovering that the accident is a success. Too large a proportion of our divorces, which are the disgrace of our modern social life, come from early indiscretions.

MATRIMONIAL CELEBRATIONS.

The happiest of matrimonial celebrations is the silver wedding. The golden one is reminiscent; it is for grown up children and grandchildren; they look upon the old couple with affection, are glad that they are still upon the stage, feel a guardianship of their health, and yet have flown from the nest and made their own. But at the silver wedding, the bride and groom are in the zenith of their intellectual and physical powers, they have overcome most of the difficulties of life, they are established in the security of the present and

the future and they still have a guiding hand and a lifegiving interest in shaping the careers and helping the progress of their boys and girls.

Twenty-five years of effort is the climacteric in business and the professions. By that time the clerk has become manager or partner or head of the firm; the reporter has become an editor; the telegraph operator or the head of the section gang or the conductor has become general manager or president of the road; the apprentice in the machine shop has become the foreman or the master mechanic. In other words, the underbrush has been cleared away, the road has been leveled and macadamized, the bridges have been built and the way is clear for advancement, or for retirement and rest.

ORATORICAL REMINISCENCES.

In 1893, I delivered the oration at the opening of the Columbian Exposition at Chicago. It was the first one of these great expositions after the centennial one in 1876. I addressed the largest audience under one roof that any orator ever had. The exposition building covered many acres, was about a half mile long and a quarter mile wide. It had 90,000 chairs and standing room for 50,000 more. In that vast auditorium the unconscious movement of such a mass of people made a roar like Niagara. Mr. Blaine, who was a great and successful public speaker, said to me once, that he was certain after much experience that the largest audience capable of hearing perfectly and enjoying an orator, was 6,000. I am sure that more than 6,000 heard me then. I spoke afterwards in the Coliseum in Chicago, which held 28,000, and while they could not hear with comfort I felt by those signs which a speaker so well understands that the whole audience did hear the address. I have many times had little or no difficulty in reaching 10,000 people. I afterwards delivered the opening address at the Omaha fair, the very successful, delightful and beautiful one at Charleston and one other. I remember the shock to my vanity which occurred at the Omaha fair. My guide was Mr. Morton, the father of Paul Morton and Secretary of Agriculture in Cleveland's cabinet. In speaking of the different shows he said: "There is a ballet from New York. It is the only show which is a total failure, because

probably a worse lot of dancers never were got together. They have neither art, nor grace nor beauty." I said, "Out of loyalty to my State of New York, I suppose I must attend the show." So we took seats in the empty auditorium. His verdict was correct as to the show, but soon every seat was filled, the aisles were jammed and people were standing almost on each other's shoulders. With great difficulty we made our way out. Then the secret was revealed. The barker was shouting, "Ladies and gentlemen, this way. In this show is the only opportunity to see the orator of the day, the only chance to see the great orator from the East, Chauncey M. Depew. Admission only ten cents, ten cents, ladies and gentlemen, to see the great orator of the day."

"HOW SOON WE ARE FORGOT."

Reminiscences recall how rapidly time flies, and as dear old Rip Van Winkle, in the person of that most delightful actor of his time, Joe Jefferson, used to say, "How soon we are forgot."

One of the most brilliant and forceful of my colleagues during my time in the Senate was Foraker of Ohio. He commanded the attention of his colleagues and largely of the country. Within the last few days, there has come from the publisher two volumes of his reminiscences. They are written with his accustomed vigor, incisiveness and positiveness. I was reading a few days since a long and discriminating criticism upon the book. The period covered, so far as the Senate is concerned, was from 1898 to 1908. Several Senators and questions were uppermost in the public mind during the whole of that period. Some of the ablest and most famous men who have ever adorned that great body participated in these discussions and were the authors of measures of vital importance at the time, but the critic says, "While these reminiscences are interesting from an historical standpoint, they have no co-temporary meaning." The actors are either dead or have passed off the stage. There is little or no recollection of them at present. The measures have gone upon the statute books or they failed and have passed out of sight, and yet the period covered by Senator Foraker, and it was one of the most interesting and exciting in the whole his-

tory of the country, began eighteen years ago and ended eight years ago. "How soon we are forgot."

I had the good fortune to become well acquainted about thirty years ago, with Mr. Gladstone. He is one of the very few statesmen or men of note whom one meets in a lifetime whom it was a supreme privilege to know. I have never met anyone of such wide vision and varied acquirements. There seemed no limit to his knowledge, and intimate knowledge, of questions in every realm of human activity and inquiry. He had to an extraordinary degree the faculty of acquisition, absorption and assimilation. Whoever he met, man or woman, instantly became the victim of those inquiring tentacles which fastened upon the subject and drew from him or her in a short time the results of the study and work of a lifetime. I came to know him better because, like most Americans, I was deeply interested in Home Rule for Ireland. It is curious how American sentiment on that subject was misinterpreted on the other side. Most of the distinguished people I met expressed amazement that there should be such intense hostility in the United States against England. The Prince of Wales, afterwards King Edward the Seventh, an exceedingly open-minded and fair-minded man and always most cordial to our country, inquired of me with deep anxiety one day, "Is this home rule sentiment which seems to be so universal with you in America a desire to break up the British Empire?" I told him not at all, but it was the faith which we Americans had in federated government, our union of sovereign states with certain powers in the general government and others reserved to the states, that had been in our judgment the cause of the growth, prosperity and power of the United States and the success of our experiment in government.

Mr. Gladstone, while probably not the greatest orator who had ever appeared in the House of Commons, was the greatest orator of his time. He certainly was one of the greatest party leaders who has ever appeared in the politics of a free government and he envisioned the future as few statesmen ever did. In the world tragedy of today, the Parliament of which he was master for so many years, is meeting questions which involve the very existence of the Empire and all the possibilities of its future. There are a number of strong men in the House of Commons who were there with Mr. Glad-

stone, and yet in the debates which are taking place one fails to find any mention, reminiscence or recollection of this great statesman. Twenty-four years ago, at 83 years of age, he had one of the greatest triumphs of his life. He had overthrown his enemies, he had become supreme by a great majority in the House of Commons and was again Prime Minister. I know of no instance of a man of that age enduring the hardships of such a canvass, coming out triumphantly and then assuming the reins of government. This he crowned by hammering through the House of Commons his favorite measure of home rule, which of course met an overwhelming defeat in the House of Lords. I met a lady recently who during the many years she had lived in London was a frequent attendant at the House of Commons. I said to her, "Tell me something about Gladstone and his oratory and what you thought of it." She said, "O, Gladstone. He pounded the table." "How soon we are forgot!"

HARRISON AND CLEVELAND.

When we met here first, the Harrison administration was closing and Cleveland's was imminent. Both of these statesmen went out of office singularly unpopular. They were misrepresented, abused and hated. If I read the history of the administrations of American Presidents aright, both Harrison and Cleveland will grow in fame with time. Harrison was certainly one of the ablest and Cleveland one of the most courageous of our chief magistrates. Harrison's unpopularity was due to a singularly cold and repellent manner. He was a great lawyer, had been an admirable volunteer soldier and possessed executive qualities of rare distinction, but he repelled all who came in contact with him. The favorite designation of him among Senators and Congressmen was "The Iceberg." I happened to hold the position as nominee of the State of New York and outside for President in 1888, where I could have much to say as to who should be the selection of the Convention when I retired, and I selected Harrison. The support of New York made his nomination good and his election followed. I led his forces in the Convention four years afterwards, where he was renominated. Now as to the question whether he was a cold, isolated, selfish man, which were the charges against him. He offered me after

his inauguration every place in his Cabinet except Secretary of State, which he said he had promised to Mr. Blaine, or any mission abroad. It was impossible for me at that time to enter public life and I declined. I never shall forget the interview after his renomination in 1892. He said to me, "My life has been one of intense struggle, a continuous and bitter fight, everything I have got I have won by hard knocks, most strenuous work and fierce contests. You are the only man who has spontaneously supported me, and effectively so. I want to show my gratitude. I can offer you at present nothing but broken bread, the Secretaryship of State for the balance of my term, but its continuance if I am re-elected." All this was said with an emotion so deep and profound that it was painful. Beneath that cold exterior, harsh voice and repellent manner, was one of the warmest of hearts and the most responsive of sentiments, but afraid, from long experience with hostile elements, that a show of feeling would be taken as an evidence of weakness.

THE CURRENCY QUESTION.

Two questions whose wise solution is essential to the prosperity of the country are the currency and railroads. Both of these have received more attention and legislation during our quarter of a century than in all preceding years. It is interesting to take note of the epoch-making character of the effort by Congress and the courts to give us a currency in harmony with that which has been demonstrated to be right by the experience of the highly organized financial and industrial nations of the world, and a regulation of railroads and a solving of the railway problem which will be in accordance with the proper development, progress and defense of the United States.

We had, early in our history, reached a sound basis for banking when it became a football in politics. In all countries, a central bank is the regulator and the United States National Bank was increasing in efficiency in serving that purpose in our system. When General Jackson, the most autocratic and masterful of our Presidents, wanted to use the bank for his political ambitions and could not, he vetoed the renewal of the charter and was surprised to find that the power of the bank was still potent in an-

other way. He peremptorily ordered the withdrawal of the United States deposits. His first Secretary of the Treasury, a financier, absolutely refused and was dismissed. His successor, also a financier, absolutely refused and was dismissed. His third appointee, who neither knew nor cared anything for finance, but was an obedient servant of the President, promptly removed the deposits; the Senate refused to confirm the Secretary, he lost his job but the bank was destroyed. The Senate passed a resolution declaring the act of the President not only unconstitutional but a usurpation of arbitrary powers. The politics of the country were largely dependent for four years upon that resolution remaining on the records of the Senate, and in 1837, it was expunged and Gen. Jackson's reputation as a financier reincarnated. Then the country waded through the welter of state banks and their bankruptcies, state bank bills and their uncertainties, frequent panics and frightful financial and industrial disasters, until the Civil War. Out of the necessities of that conflict came the National Banking Act, which was progress, and decided progress. Then came fiat money, happily set aside by education, and then the gigantic struggle for the parity of fluctuating silver with the fixed standard of gold.

As we look back over the period covered by the recollection of comparatively young men here, we are amazed to find how the silver microbe entered the mental machinery and controlled the thinking apparatus of the leading men of both parties during these ten years. For the rescue of the country from plunging over the precipice into financial chaos by reason of this silver heresy, we are indebted to the ability and stubborn courage of President Grover Cleveland. With the enormous power, greater than now, of a President, with vast patronage to hand out and favors to bestow, Cleveland forced the repeal of the silver act, which was reducing our currency to a Mexican or Chinese standard, through a Congress of whose members scarcely any of his own party voted as they believed, and not many of the opposition. More than anything else, this farsighted and patriotic action of the President lost him popular support and he retired from the Presidency practically by unanimous consent. I saw much of him when he returned to private life. He had no regrets and no misgivings, was absolutely certain he was right and that time would vindicate him, and so was one of the most happy and con-

tented of ex-Presidents. The vindication has come more rapidly than he thought, and today he stands deservedly high among great Presidents of the United States.

The adoption of the gold standard under McKinley was one of the signal triumphs of his administration.

TRIBUTE TO SENATOR NELSON W. ALDRICH.

Here I pause to pay tribute to a statesman little known by the general public, because he possessed none of the arts of popularity and apparently cared nothing for popular applause. I mean Nelson W. Aldrich of Rhode Island. He was thirty years in the Senate. He had that incalculable element of independence which came from the certainty of continued backing in his own State. He was a close student and finance was his hobby. The ambition of his life was to place the currency system of the United States upon a wise and permanent basis which would prevent panics and furnish an elastic currency whose expansion and contraction automatically would be equal to every demand and every crisis. As the result of his great experience, his profound study, his analytical mind evolved the reserve system. The failure to secure its adoption was a disappointment more acute than even his best friends understood, because he was one of the most reserved, reticent and self-contained of men, and he retired voluntarily to private life. There is very little of the administrative acts of President Wilson with which I agree, but he certainly deserves lasting credit for making one of the fundamentals of his scheme of government at the beginning the settlement of the currency question. He had a power over Congress almost equal to that of Gen. Jackson. In this case, it was a useful autocracy and it forced through a reluctant Congress the Federal Reserve Act. It practically settles for the future our financial system upon a proper basis. The best of the act is Aldrich's; its weak points are those which were injected for political reasons. But those weak points are not fatal and will be obviated in time. There is no more remarkable illustration of the power and continuing strength of a mighty personality, even when wrong, than that it took this country, with generation after generation of vigorous thinkers and independent actors, from 1832 to 1914, eighty-two years, nearly a century, to correct the evils and remove

the effects of the arbitrary acts and imperial whims of Andrew Jackson.

THE RAILROAD QUESTION.

Important as was the currency question and our financial conditions, the railroad question, still unsettled, is of greater moment to the country. In all ages of the world, transportation routes have built up empires, great cities and prosperous communities, and the change of them has led to their decay and ruin. The railway has largely taken the place of the water routes for transportation, because the railroad can go anywhere and is not dependent upon nature. At the close of the Civil War, our railway system was in its infancy, but now it has 250,000 miles in operation, an investment in round numbers of twenty billion dollars, gross revenue of three billion dollars, two millions of employees directly on the payroll and two millions more indirectly but nevertheless equally dependent upon railway prosperity. In other words, about twenty millions of men, women and children of our one hundred millions are dependent directly upon the railway treasury for a living. They carry yearly one thousand millions of passengers, with a safety that is a marvel. While they have crossed the Continent and reached developed vast interior territories, yet their work is still incomplete. As irrigation and water power are understood and permitted, more railroads are absolutely required if any benefit is to come from these improvements. At least ten thousand millions of dollars more must be invested in construction and extension if the resources of our country are to provide for coming and increasing generations of inhabitants.

From 1870 to 1880 the construction of railroads was encouraged by land grants and local bounties. When the products of the farm on the market fell below the cost of production, a granger movement led to drastic legislation. When New York State presented me as its candidate for the Presidency in the National Convention of 1888, I was then president of the New York Central Railroad. Granger legislation and granger sentiment were exceedingly violent in the Middle West. A representative came from a delegation of one of these States, who said, "If you are nominated, you now being a railroad president, it will ruin our party in my State." I said, "We have got all over that in New York. Why does

it survive in your State?" He said, "Because both parties have cultivated it." And further, "Every town in my State has a grange that meets weekly. The local attorneys and candidates for office address these granges upon the railroad question. We tell them that freight rates are robbery and that if their farm products were carried free, as they ought to be, it would make all the difference between prosperity and bankruptcy. We Republican lawyers and politicians have outpaced our Democratic opponents and captured the grange vote." "Well," I said, "who are your clients?" His answer was, "I am the county attorney of the Rock Island railroad, and that is my living."

After rate legislation, which proved a failure because it crippled the roads so that they could not render the service which communities required, came happily the commission system. I think I was the first American railroad man to advocate commissions. They were first advisory, afterwards mandatory. Then came, in 1887, the Interstate Commerce Commission. It was constructed on a wrong principle of encouraging, promoting and forcing competition among railroads, which led inevitably to the bankruptcy of the weaker lines and the ruin of the territory which they served, but has been enormously improved since, first by the Anti-Rebate Act of 1903, then by the Hepburn Act of 1906, increasing the powers of the commission and including in its authority sleeping cars, the express companies, private cars and pipe lines, and further by the amendments of 1910, enlarging still more its powers and gathering in telegraphs, telephones and cables. The powers of the Interstate Commerce Commission have also been greatly enlarged by the construction of these laws by the courts. Now the railroad in almost everything essential to its welfare is under the control not only of the government of the United States, but of forty-eight State governments. That situation is intolerable, because no enterprise, great or small, can perform proper service or properly develop under forty-eight masters with conflicting interests. Twenty per cent of the traffic of the United States is intrastate, or within the lines of the State, while eighty per cent is interstate and interests the whole country. The one hundred per cent should be wholly in the power of the Federal Commission. The income of the railroads was in 1914 \$3,118,920,318. Of this income 45 per cent goes to employees, 5 per cent to stock-

holders and the other half goes for supplies, coal, rails, cars, ties, locomotives, repairs, maintenance, interest and taxes.

Our country and conditions are so different because of the powers of the States, sovereign in many ways, that it is difficult to find precedents to guide us in the experiences of other countries. The German government has taken over all the railroads and they are government owned and controlled, but they are part of the military system needs and ambitions of the country and the industrial life is subordinate to the military power. Extensions and new construction which are necessary for a growing country are far behind the needs of Germany under this system. In its relations to its employees, they become a part of the high militarism of the German Empire. They are virtually enlisted soldiers and subject to martial law; their pay is one quarter that of the employees of the railways of the United States. The French government has taken over one line, with results disastrous to its efficiency and income. The demands of the members of the legislative assembly and powerful politicians for patronage have crowded the employment so far beyond the needs of the service that inefficiency has resulted and deficiencies in net revenue cause an annual loss to the government treasury. Great Britain has the better system, somewhat like ours, with a Board of Trade possessing power over the management, conduct, rates and conditions of the railroads. The results of the foreign systems and our own so far as the public is concerned, of which rates is the most important, are these: In 1867, the freight rates on American railroads were 1.92 cents, or practically 2 cents, per ton per mile. They have declined until in 1915 they were .76 of a cent per ton per mile, or otherwise a decline of one and one-third. They are 2 cents per ton per mile in Great Britain, 1.51 cents per ton per mile in France and 1.21 cents per ton per mile in Germany. When a mill per ton per mile makes such a difference in revenue, one can easily see how almost incalculably enormous is the difference between these foreign rates and our own to the benefit of the shippers of the United States.

TRIBUTE TO A LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEER.

I pause here to pay tribute to a locomotive engineer whom I have long known, Dennis J. Cassin. The Empire State

Express, one of the famous trains in the world, has been running for twenty-four years. It has carried eight millions of passengers and never lost one. During sixteen years of that period Dennis J. Cassin was its engineer, and except by slight accidents to the machinery, occurring marvelously few times, has never been late and never lost a day. He was worthily the recipient, in a hot competition, of the Harriman medal for distinguished record in handling his locomotive.

TRIBUTE TO RAILWAY OFFICIALS.

I want also to pay tribute to the executive officers of the railways of the country. All of them, with scarcely an exception, have come up from the ranks. They have been advanced from humble positions not by influence, but by merit. They have little or no financial interest in the companies of which they are the executive heads, but they have a keen and conscientious sense of duty to the public, to the employees of the railways, to the stockholders and bondholders. They believe that true popularity in the administration of their most exacting duties comes from the efficiency of the machine which they manage, the service which it renders, the perfection in which it is maintained and the reasonable returns which it gives. Acting as they do in semi-public capacities, their ability, their integrity, their honor and their efficiency are deserving of public confidence.

WHAT IS THE MATTER WITH THE RAILWAYS?

Now, what is the matter with the railways? The problem is so nearly solved that it is most unfortunate it should be halted by demagogism or half-informed or misinformed clamor. The railway lives, pays its employees, buys its material, keeps its road in order, adds to its efficiency, extends its line only by the monies which come into the treasury from the rates which it is permitted to charge. This the government regulates absolutely. Just now a crisis is impending which illustrates the situation and its conditions. Four hundred thousand of the two millions of employees, the most highly paid and of high intelligence, who operate the trains, have formulated demands upon the whole railway system of the country, which will exact in addition to their present pay,

one hundred millions of dollars a year. The railways can get that money only in three ways. One is to stop dividends and the payment of interest on their indebtedness, which means bankruptcy and deterioration fatal to efficient service for the public. It means the ruin of savings banks and life insurance companies and the dislocation of our whole system of credit and income. It also means the end of extensions and construction, because capital under such circumstances could not be procured at any price. Another is to cut down the train service, the shop work for repairs and replacements, the maintenance of the track and other economies, which would lay off one-third of the force and cripple beyond calculation the farming, commercial and manufacturing interests desiring rapid and regular transportation to market. The third remedy is an advance of rates sufficient to meet the expenditure. This should be in the hands of the government; it should be in the control of the Interstate Commerce Commission. That body should have full power and it should be made its duty to investigate this demand for one hundred millions, and all other demands, ascertain if they are right and proper that the whole or what part of it should be granted, and then adjust a rate which would meet the expenditure. I see no other way in which an elastic system can be created which will meet the requirements of labor and permit the maintenance and necessary expansion of the railways.

THE DANGER OF STRIKES.

There is a suggestion that if the demand is not granted it might be enforced by a strike. I do not believe that the wise leaders of the railway organizations would go to that extreme, but if it did happen, and it might, has anyone contemplated what it would mean if all the railways in the United States were stopped? There is no city which has supplies of food for a week, nor any village or town. In two days, bread would be a dollar a loaf and meat not to be had at any price. From lack of coal and inability to relieve the congestion of their warehouses of accumulated products, factories would shut down. With the necessities of life not procurable at any price, the well-to-do would be no better off than those who were dependent upon their daily wage, except for a while, while food lasted, but for those who were dependent upon

their daily wage, with wages stopped and prices beyond the reach of their savings, the European war, with all its horrors, would form an insignificant chapter in history, compared with American anarchy and chaos.

CENTENARY OF SAVINGS BANKS AND ILLUMINATING GAS.

But let us dismiss our fears and be in harmony with the octogenarian who said the only troubles he ever had came from worrying about things which never happened. Our year of 1916 is the centenary of the savings bank. One hundred years ago the first institution of this kind was established, on December 13th. Today there are in the United States 2,159, and the savings deposited with them, in round numbers, amount to five thousand millions of dollars, almost exactly the vast sum which Germany exacted from France after the war of 1870, and not a dollar of which has France since then, with all her prosperity, been able to pay, though she has kept up the interest. Only think, just for a moment, what that five thousand millions of dollars is, the story it tells of thrift, of economies, of little contributions made from self-denial to the provident fund; think for a moment of what it means for homes, for independence, for salvation in sickness and unemployment, for better citizenship, better manhood, better womanhood, hopefulness for childhood and happiness in old age.

1916 is also the centenary of illuminating gas. I do not mean gas of the political orator, that has existed ever since Grecian and Roman times, but the substitution of gas for the candle and the lamp, for the coal stove and the oil burner, is one of those discoveries which add to contented and comfortable longevity. Speaking of longevity, I had occasion to take issue with a citizen who a few months ago retired from business and gave up a large salary at sixty. He claimed that a man's powers begin to diminish at fifty, and before he became inefficient and miserable, he should devote the rest of his life to rest and recreation. I have been a close student of this question for many years. The result of these studies has convinced me that the mental, physical and moral powers of men and women either grow or deteriorate; nothing stands still. One occupation can be substituted for another, but so long as one lives, he must have something to do which will

occupy his mind and his muscles. He cannot play off his muscles against his mind by giving his days to golf and his leisure to mental rust, nor play off his mind against his muscles by giving his days and nights to reading and study while he becomes anemic and an invalid. But I make an exception because we have no data covering that period. I saw a few days ago in the paper that a Mr. Britton of Plainfield, New Jersey, has been an active citizen not only in his business but in every department of the neighborhood life until he has reached the age of 102. He declared that then he intended to retire and devote the rest of his years to recreation. I have a suspicion, however, that Mr. Britton is making a mistake. Peter Cooper's appearance on the platform, with his rubber ring on his arm upon which he sat, when he was in the 90's, and the active interest he took in the welfare work which was the object of the meeting, were inspirations for hope and effort to the whole audience.

TALK WITH A DEMOCRATIC STATESMAN.

I had an interesting talk some months since with one of the ablest jurists and most distinguished Democratic statesmen in the country. I said to him, "It is seldom that duty and sentiment work together." The occasions are rare, almost isolated, in public life where partisanship can be laid aside and recognition given to eminent merit, accompanied by recognition of the broadmindedness and impartiality when he had the opportunity, of the citizen to be honored. Taft as President, following the habit of a lifetime, was always judicial. The ambition of his life had been to be upon the Supreme Court of the United States, and he had for it the reverence of a distinguished judge and a trained lawyer. The ambition of every member of the bar is to reach that court and be one of the nine who constitute this wonderful tribunal. Three vacancies occurred during Taft's presidency, one of Chief Justice and two of Associate Justices. He filled them all with Democrats, and the highest place he gave to a Democrat who had also been a Confederate soldier, but whose eminent fitness was recognized by everyone. Mr. Taft is now at the zenith of his powers. To have an ex-President who had also demonstrated in a long career eminent judicial qualities in that court,

would be something so unique, so beyond all the possibilities of ever happening again, that it would arouse among the people a study of that tribunal and acquaintance with the wonderful service it has done and is doing for the country and would enormously strengthen it in the popular estimation. "Do you think it possible," I said to the judge, "that under these conditions, with the tremendous pressure there will be, if a vacancy occurs, from party friends and party leaders, would it be possible to find reciprocity for this broadmindedness of President Taft?" There is no doubt that the disappointment to his party friends caused by his appointment of these Democrats was one of the causes of his defeat. The judge said, "If the opportunity occurs, I am going to do my best to have the President place Mr. Taft upon the Supreme Court." The vacancy occurred, the judge was eager, and associated with him most of the executives of the bar associations of the United States, but their request was met with the emphatic statement that no one but a Democrat would be considered. We have now had for over a month the most extraordinary and remarkable spectacle connected with the confirmation of a candidate for one of the Justices of this august tribunal, a trial by a committee of the Senate as to the fitness of the appointee. Citizens of the highest character and most eminent repute in the country, both lawyers and laymen, have given testimony against the confirmation. It is not an edifying spectacle, and it harms the Supreme Court. Beyond any suggestion possible, it is necessary for continued confidence in that tribunal, that both those who are named for it and those who are there should meet every requirement in fact and in sentiment which the immortal Cæsar is said to have exacted of his wife—that she must be not only pure but above suspicion.

352ND ANNIVERSARY OF SHAKESPEARE.

Shakespeare, St. George and I were born on the 23d day of April. I said to an eminent authoress, noted for her seriousness and lack of humor, "Unfortunately St. George and Shakespeare are both dead and cannot enjoy this anniversary of theirs and mine." She answered, "But I know that." This is Shakespeare's 352nd anniversary and my 82nd. No mere mortal of any age, race or country ever contributed so much

to the mentality of the world, to its culture and pleasure, to the inspiration of millions of men and women, the indication of their careers and eminence in their careers, as William Shakespeare. It is singular that he is more appreciated and better known in Germany today than in Great Britain, and as well known in France as in England. His works are in the libraries of English-speaking peoples all around the globe, and if there can be in that household only two books, one is Shakespeare. We Americans can congratulate our country that we have contributed to the stage the most eminent dramatic critic of the action of Shakespeare's plays of our generation, and probably of any generation, in the venerable William Winter, and it was a distinguished contribution to Shakesperean lore when the professor of a Nebraska college and his wife spent months rummaging among the musty records of the law courts in London and discovered these contracts and deeds reincarnating Shakespeare in the daily activities of his time and presenting copies of his unique and remarkable signature and his carelessness in spelling his name. I was a student at Yale when Miss Bacon started the controversy to prove that Shakespeare's plays were written by Bacon. Libraries have since been filled, cryptographs have been written and deciphered, cofferdams have been built on the Thames to find on the bottom of that historic river where Bacon concealed his original manuscripts, and yet on his 352nd anniversary Shakespeare is better known than he was in life, his reputation more secure, his authorship more completely decided, than ever before. The imagination which is Shakespeare is not Bacon; the philosophy which is Bacon is not Shakespeare. If, as I believe, those who have crossed the great divide take cognizance in the other world of what is happening here, surely on this 352nd anniversary of Shakespeare's birth, when it is being celebrated even amidst the alarms and horrors of the greatest war of all time, Shakespeare and Bacon must be viewing the scene together, and we can hear Bacon say, "William, my books have gone out of fashion, yours are more alive than they were when you were on earth. If some ardent controversialists and enthusiastic namesakes of mine had not yoked me with you, I should be today dead in name and fame. I trust, William, with that amiability which was your characteristic in life, you will recognize that this service to me has done no harm to you."

WASHINGTON'S FAREWELL ADDRESS.

It has been the custom for many generations in the United States Senate to have Washington's farewell address read from the desk on the 22d of February. This is done by some Senator selected by the Vice-President. It is always a perfunctory performance. I was the chosen reader six years ago; the Senate and galleries were crowded, but it was an audience paying respect to the memory of the Father of his Country and little or no attention to the message which he left his countrymen. When this year that message was read, it was so apt and applicable to the times and conditions that it seemed as if George Washington was reincarnated. His advices as to foreign relations and preparedness at home, not for war but for safety, were as timely in 1916 as they were in 1796, when he gave this address to his countrymen and their descendants.

THE WAR AND PREPAREDNESS.

Fifteen nations, eight-tenths of the professing Christians and all of the great powers and militant sovereignties outside of the United States and the South American republics are slaughtering each other, destroying property and ruining civilian populations. When the war is over and peace reigns there will be millions upon millions of soldiers returning to bankrupt nations and shattered industries to earn their living. Peace will be declared, but the militant spirit will be still mad. There will be no regard for treaties and none for nations not able to protect themselves. This country is the great prize. Its accumulated wealth, its hoarded treasures, its thriving industries will be very tempting. Its navy is unequal to the defence of the coast, its harbor defences inadequate, its army insignificant in numbers and munitions of war practically non-existent. The big guns invented during this conflict destroy cities twenty miles distant. Armies carry as part of their equipment guns which can shoot shells filled with shrapnel or poisonous gases five miles distant with an accuracy that will hit the mark intended within a radius of one foot, while the machine guns sweep every living thing in front of the attacking forces. I cannot understand the pacifist. I read my friend Mr. Bryan, who is always attractive and persuasive.

He says if this invading force should land, a million farmers in their Fords would meet them and drive them into the sea. I am afraid then would be a practical answer of the suggestion why a Ford machine is like a bathtub, because everybody wants one and nobody wants to be seen in it. Our friend Mr. Ford, with the best intentions in the world, would take a committee of automobile manufacturers from Detroit, a few clergymen and suffragettes and stand in front of the onrushing hosts of the enemy and say, "Boys, stop, this is not fair," and of course the enemy would disperse and take to their ships and go back to their homes.

Preparedness means simply a navy sufficient and not too great to meet the enemy in the open ocean, beyond the coast lines, and an army which would be equal to any possible immediate attack and the nucleus around which could be gathered a force so great that successful invasion would be in the minds of any general staff of any military country absolutely futile. Such preparedness is not aggression, nor is there the slightest evidence of an aggressive spirit among the American people. Behind this preparedness, recent occurrences and experiences have demonstrated that one of the greatest duties of our press and our schools, of our congresses and of our legislatures, of our patriotic men and women, is to cultivate Americanism.

THE REVIVAL OF THE NATIONAL SPIRIT BY THE WAR.

The most remarkable development of this war has been the revival of national spirit and devotion to national ideals among the belligerents. In Great Britain all parties are welded into one. In Germany the socialists stand side by side with the junkers for Kaiser and Fatherland. In Austria there is a fierce nationalism among its many races for the first time in generations. In Italy the people forced the Government into a life-and-death struggle for territorial unity. The French have risen to heights of patriotism and universal sacrifices of life and property for France unequalled since the Spartan mother sent her son to battle with the injunction to return with his shield or borne upon it by his comrades. With us unprecedented prosperity, unequalled distribution of wealth to capital and labor, and general self-satisfaction and

content have paralyzed for the time the traditional Americanism which counted the honor of the Republic and the safety of its citizens beyond all other considerations. I have met with men of large affairs from all parts of the United States who said we better suffer any indignity or outrage rather than stop this business boom by war, and others who echoed this surrender of honor and right rather than have their sons drawn for battle. If the farmers who fought at Concord and Lexington had felt this way, "the shot which echoed round the world" would never have been fired and there would have been no Republic of the United States. If the generation which brought to a successful conclusion the Civil War, had so valued their citizenship, a divided and hostile country would have taken the place of a government now more than ever the ark of liberty and the hope of the world. A nation prepared to defend or enforce its rights need never have war. Granted an adequate army and navy for immediate use, and a nucleus for rallying our exhaustless resources and the potential power of the United States will never be challenged. That has been our experience in the past, with Austria in the Koszta case, with Louis Napoleon when our threat drove his army out of Mexico, with Great Britain when Cleveland's message forced arbitration.

THE MEANING, SPIRIT, PAST AND FUTURE OF OUR FLAG.

Patrick Henry's speech with its peroration "give me liberty or give me death," Daniel Webster's oration with its soul-stirring climax, "Liberty and Union, now and forever, one and inseparable," were for generations past part of our schoolbooks, known by heart by the schoolboys and spoken in roadside schoolhouses and at every high-school and academy commencement. Education is the foundation of citizenship, but its overelaboration has relegated essentials to the rear and "ics" and "ologies" to the front. Let us return to that part of the old system which would make eugenics, biologies, social service, economic theories and efficiency programmes based upon thorough grounding in patriotism, country and the meaning and spirit, the past and the future of our flag.

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